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MAHATHIR CALLS FOR STUDY ON INTERPRETATIONS THAT WEAKEN MUSLIMS

Mahathir-IKIM

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today interpretations of Islam which confuse and weaken Muslims should be carefully studied and corrected.

Only through sincere study and academic efforts guided by the facts could something be done to revive the glory of Islam, the Prime Minister said.

Launching the Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM) at the Putra World Trade Centre, here, he added that the study should be free from sentiments or impartiality common among Muslims today.

He said: +The facts must be accepted and fantasies cast aside. There is no gain in claiming that Muslims are progressive and strong although they are weak.

+Similarly, there is no benefit in claiming that others are backward and weak although they are progressive and strong.+

There was no room for self-deception in an academic study, he added. -- more

▼03/07/12-45MST

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Mahathir-IKIM 2 Kuala Lumpur

Expressing the hope that IKIM play a forward role in the study of Islam, Dr Mahathir said researchers at the institute need to keep an open mind and have the courage to question orthodox views.

+What is foremost is the truth and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Teachings interpreted and created by others who came later cannot be considered as equal to that of the Prophet and, therefore, can be dissected and studied, even dropped, if they are found to conflict with the Quran and teachings of our great Prophet,+ he added.

He said it was no mean task because strong opposition would come from people who really believe that what they believe in and teach were the truth and could not be questioned.

He added: +Any doubts about what they believe in will be considered by them to be against the practice.

+As such, when something new that may be based on scientific truth put forward, they claim it is untrue because it conflicts with the belief they hold. -- more

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+That the world is round like a ball, that the sky and stars are farther than they imagined, that man could go to the moon... all these were rejected in the past but eventually accepted.

+The acceptance of these facts does not deny the truth of Islamic teachings. It only denies the interpretations and beliefs of the ulamas of the past.+

He said with the passing of time, much more changes in beliefs had to be made and old interpretations might no longer suit the facts.

Many more things and capabilities which are considered strange and impossible would become common fact and usual, he added.

He said: +But Islam continues to be relevant and accurate. The fault lies not in the religion but in those who interpret it.+

Mahathir said the institute need not fear opposition to its research work to seek the truth that would bring progress to the religion, Muslims and the nation. -- more

▼03/07/12-54MST

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+If Islam could at one time before create a glorious civilisation, can't Islam today once again bring forth a civilisation equal in splendour ?+ he asked.

He said right thinking people would have the confidence that it was not something that was impossible although it would not be easy to achieve.

+Certainly it will take time but an objective cannot be achieved without a start being made. All things begin with the first step,+ he added.

He said the institute was set up to overcome the widespread confusion among Muslims as well as non-Muslims to the extent, of bringing about misunderstanding not only between Muslims and non-Muslims but also between the Muslims themselves.

In conjunction with the launching of IKIM, Dr Mahathir also officiated a congress on the theme +Towards the 21st Century: Islam and Vision 2020+, jointly organised by the institute and the government. -- more

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Mahathir-IKIM 5 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Underlining the need for the country and people to prepare for the 21st century, Dr Mahathir said the objective to make Malaysia a developed country by the year 2020 did not mean that preparations for the hereafter should be ignored.

+Unfortunately, there are some who seem to stress the vision for the hereafter. The truth is the government and Muslims have never neglected the hereafter. But, the hereafter must be balanced with the world,+ he added.

The Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, who is IKIM chairman, said the institute was set up by the government as a think-tank to enhance the people's understanding of Islam and its values as well as its relation to life.

The congress aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of Vision 2020 from the Islam view and its relation to development of the people, the economy, science and technology, he added.

A total of 250 participants are attending the two-day congress. --
Bernama

▼03/07/13-23MST